
AP[®] World History: Modern

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

Inside:

Long Essay Question 4

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
- ☒ **Student Samples**
- ☒ **Scoring Commentary**

Question 4: Long Essay Question, New Technologies and Individuals

6 points

General Scoring Notes

- Except where otherwise noted, each point of these rubrics is earned independently; for example, a student could earn a point for evidence without earning a point for thesis/claim.
- **Accuracy:** The components of these rubrics require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, essays may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam essays should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge, skills, and practices described below.

In the twentieth century, technological advances in communication, transportation, medicine, agriculture, and other fields shaped human development and interactions with both intended and unintended consequences.

Develop an argument that evaluates the extent to which new technologies improved the lives of individuals during this period.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis/Claim [0-1 points]	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Are not historically defensible. - Only restate or rephrase the prompt. - Do not respond to the prompt. - Do not establish a line of reasoning. - Are overgeneralized.	Responses that earn this point: Provide a historically defensible thesis or claim about the extent to which new technologies improved the lives of individuals during the twentieth century. The thesis or claim must either provide some indication of the reason for making that claim OR establish categories of the argument.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Provide a restatement of the prompt <i>“New technology improved the lives of people in the twentieth century.”</i> Provide a historically defensible claim, but do not establish a line of reasoning <i>“The internet and computers changed daily life for many people.”</i> Provide a claim that is not historically defensible <i>“Improved health care and new technologies spread all over the world in the first half of the twentieth century, ending famine and spurring huge population growth.”</i> Do not focus on the topic of the prompt <i>“The Cold War was a conflict between capitalism and communism.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt <i>“New transportation technologies like airplanes and container ships brought people into much closer contact and increased the availability of many new products.”</i> Establish a line of reasoning that evaluates the topic of the prompt with analytic categories <i>“During the twentieth century, significant improvements in medicine and pharmaceutical research significantly improved the lives of people around the world by reducing child mortality, lowering mortality from infectious and epidemic diseases, as well as allowing people to live longer with many chronic diseases, such as cancer and diabetes, all of which contributed to longer life expectancies as well as growing populations.”</i> Establish a line of reasoning <i>“Increased industrialization harmed the lives of many individuals through environmental pollution.”</i> [Minimally acceptable thesis/claim]
Additional Notes: - The thesis or claim must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion [which may not be limited to the first or last paragraphs]. - The thesis or claim must identify a relevant development[s] in the period, although it is not required to encompass the entire period.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row B Contextualization	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
[0-1 points]	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Provide an overgeneralized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt. - Provide context that is not relevant to the prompt. - Provide a passing phrase or reference. Examples that do not earn this point: Do not provide context relevant to the topic of the prompt <i>“Decolonization led to the redrawing of some national borders.”</i> Provide an overly generalized statement about the time period referenced in the prompt <i>“The twentieth century was an incredible time for medicine.”</i>	Responses that earn this point: - Accurately describe a context relevant to new technologies or improvement of individuals’ lives during the twentieth century. Examples of relevant context that earn this point include the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: - The First or Second Industrial Revolutions - Major scientific and technological advances in sanitation and medicine - Increasing speed and volume of communication, transportation, and mobility - Advances in agricultural production and biotechnology; the Green Revolution - Increased mobility, such as advances in transportation, contributing to spread of diseases - Global conflicts, such as the First World War, contributing to the spread of many new military technologies and tactics - New technologies that contributed to the growth of state power and its expanding roles in economies and societies - States and societies striving to protect the rights of disadvantaged groups, such as women and minorities - Conservation movements and environmental movements - Nuclear energy and weapons, and the Cold War - Ideological or religious responses to the spread of industrialization or new technologies, such as religious fundamentalism, modernization movements, populism, or ethnic nationalism Example of acceptable contextualization: <i>“The Green Revolution relied on biotechnology to create new, more resilient crop varieties, as well as on advances in chemical engineering that allowed for the more efficient mass production of fertilizers and pesticides.”</i> <i>“Late nineteenth-century inventions like the telegraph and the telephone started a communication revolution.”</i> [Minimally acceptable contextualization]
	Additional Notes: - The response must describe broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question that are relevant to the topic of the prompt. - To earn this point, the context provided must be more than a phrase or reference.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row C Evidence [0-2 points]	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Provides specific examples of at least two pieces of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.	2 points Supports an argument in response to the prompt using at least two pieces of specific and relevant evidence.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			
	Responses that do not earn points: - Identify a single piece of evidence. - Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt. - Provide evidence that is outside the time period or region specified in the prompt. - Repeat information that is specified in the prompt.	Responses that earn 1 point: Identify at least two specific historical examples relevant to new technologies and improving individuals' lives during the twentieth century.	Responses that earn 2 points: Use at least two specific historical examples to support an argument regarding the extent to which new technologies improved the lives of individuals during the twentieth century.
	Examples that do not earn points: Repeat information that is specified in the prompt <i>"New technologies changed peoples' lives in many ways."</i> Provide evidence that is outside the time period specified in the prompt <i>"The telegraph helped empires communicate with and control their territories."</i>	Examples of evidence that are specific and relevant include the following [two examples required]: - Medical advancements that contributed to increased life expectancy and population growth, such as vaccines or immunizations, antibiotics - International movements to address major epidemics or pandemics, such as Ebola, influenza, or HIV/AIDS - Birth control and other advances in women's health or family planning - Increased life expectancy, rapid population growth, and their wide-ranging effects - Growth of consumer culture and new products - Nuclear energy and weapons, the threat of global nuclear war - Specific details about new transportation or communications technologies or growth of transregional migrations - The rise of labor movements to address changing working conditions due to new technologies - The growth of environmental movements to protect or conserve resources and limit pollution or other harm to the environment - New military technologies and tactics such as poison gas, tanks, firebombing campaigns, and industrial methods of genocide made warfare deadlier for combatants and non-combatants Example of a statement that earns one point for evidence: <i>"The use of personal computers and the creation of the internet affected economic productivity."</i>	Examples that successfully support an argument with evidence: <i>"The use of technologies to automate or outsource economic production in many manufacturing industries led some workers to organize into labor unions which, in some places, succeeded in negotiating legal protections for workers."</i> [Uses evidence to support an argument about the negative impact of mechanization on industrial jobs in the West] <i>"The availability of modern medicine, especially vaccines and antibiotics, as well as advances in agriculture like the Green Revolution, which increased the global food supply, contributed to huge gains in public health, reducing infectious diseases in particular."</i> [Uses evidence to support an argument about modern technologies improving health]
Additional Notes: Typically, statements credited as evidence will be more specific than statements credited as contextualization.			

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a response has a multipart argument, then it can meet the threshold of two pieces of evidence by giving one example for one part of the argument and another example for a different part of the argument, but the total number of examples must still be at least two. |
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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row D Analysis and Reasoning [0-2 points]	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Uses historical reasoning [e.g., comparison, causation, continuity, and change] to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.	2 points Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt through sophisticated argumentation and/or effective use of evidence.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			
	Responses that do not earn points: - May include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument. - May assert the use of historical reasoning but does not use it to frame or structure an argument.	Responses that earn 1 point: Must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument about the extent to which new technologies improved the lives of individuals during the twentieth century. The reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced, or the evidence may be overly general or lacking specificity.	Responses that earn 2 points: May demonstrate a complex understanding through sophisticated argumentation that is relevant to the prompt. This may be done in a variety of ways, such as: - Explaining multiple themes or perspectives to explore complexity or nuance; OR - Explaining multiple causes or effects, multiple similarities or differences, or multiple continuities or changes; OR - Explaining both cause and effect, both similarity and difference, or both continuity and change; OR - Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods or geographical areas. These connections should clearly relate to an argument that responds to the prompt. May demonstrate a complex understanding through effective use of evidence relevant to an argument that addresses the prompt. This may be done in a variety of ways that might include: - Explaining how multiple pieces of specific and relevant evidence [at least four] support a nuanced or complex argument that responds to the prompt; OR - Using evidence effectively to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different perspectives relevant to the prompt.
	Examples that do not earn points: Provide evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument <i>“The internet made global communication easier.”</i>	Using a historical reasoning process to frame or structure an argument could include: - Explaining how the creation of vaccines significantly reduced deaths from common diseases like smallpox, which improved people’s lives and led to huge population growth. - Explaining how the creation of cellular communications technology provided individuals all over the world with fast, direct communications, which led to more entrepreneurship and social bonds.	Demonstrating a complex understanding might include any of the following, if appropriate elaboration is provided: Explaining how multiple pieces of specific and relevant evidence support a nuanced argument about the prompt. For example, explaining how the development of nuclear technologies has provided new sources of energy through nuclear power plants for manufacturing as well as household consumption, but has also introduced new risks including long-term disposal of nuclear waste, possible radiation from nuclear accidents like Three Mile Island or Chernobyl, as well as the threat of nuclear war through the Cold War superpowers’ MAD doctrine as well as through nuclear proliferation.

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Question 1

Question 2

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Question 3

Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Technological advancements in the 20th century certainly improved lives ~~via~~ through advancements in medicine, transportation, and communication, but ~~if~~ these advancements also created many new problems in the world. In the 18th and 19th century, the Industrial Revolution began, kicking off ^{new inventions} ~~advancements~~ in manufacturing and transportation, forever changing societies around the globe. Transportation improved, doctors were able to make major advancements in ~~surgery~~ ^{disease treatment} and ~~prevention~~ ^{prevention} and communication methods were developed to speed up the rate at which humans communicated over long distances.

In transportation, inventions like the ^{coal-powered} steam engine, the car, and the airplane were all ~~developed~~ ~~long before~~ before and during the 20th century. These inventions sped up how fast both people and goods could travel across great distances. ~~However, these inventions~~ These all facilitated trade, ~~allowing~~ allowed people to ~~live~~ live away from urban areas, and connect with more people. However these inventions had many unintended consequences. All three, for the most part are powered by fossil fuels, which ~~lead~~ ^{lead} to climate change and the destruction of earth's natural resources by pollution. Airplanes have become vessels of war, for example the two atomic bombs dropped in world war II, which killed over a million people, were dropped from an airplane. The speed at which people can come into contact with other people thanks to planes, trains, and automobiles, has facilitated the fast transport of disease. A recent example would be the coronavirus in 2020. That led to a massive lockdown and death of millions.

In medicine, advancements like vaccines, improved hygiene, and healthier lifestyles have ^{extended} ~~improved~~ ^{increased the quality of living} ~~people's~~ lives. They allow people to ~~to~~ enjoy longer, healthier,

Page 4

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more pain-free lives. However, the consequences of these ^{advancements} have been numerous. A longer life has caused exponential population growth, leading to overcrowding and fighting over limited resources like food and water. Longer lives have led to increases in the number of people suffering from old-age diseases like alzheimers, arthritis, and heart disease. The ~~technological~~ advancements in medicine are also mostly felt by those living in the geographical north and in "first world and developed" nations.

Communication advancement have also ~~led to~~ brought about massive improvements to peoples lives. Inventions like the television, radios, phones, and social media have made it easier for people to keep in contact with people far away, ~~but~~ It has also allowed governments to deal with crises more efficiently, and communicate more directly with their constituents. However, there ^{are numerous} consequences ~~that~~ that go along with these advancements. People can access information much faster, and see what is happening in far-away places. This worked against the US in Vietnam, when the government would say ^{the US is winning} ~~we are winning~~, but Americans could see on their TVs that ^{was} ~~it was~~ not true. Phones and social media have facilitated the rise of ^{misinformation} and cyber bullying at an alarming rate.

All of this to say, these new technological advancements have certainly had a range of positive effects, but also a multitude of negative consequences.

Page 5

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During the twentieth century globalization occurred where different parts of the world came together to unify one another and spread new ideas and technologies. This led to new advances in medicine, transportation, communication and more. These new technologies greatly increased and improved the lives of individuals with new medicines such as vaccines and antibiotics, new forms of communications like the telephone and the internet, and new additions to agriculture such as fertilizer. Back in the period 1200-1750 diseases were spread easily and quickly along the networks of exchange and there was no cure or way to prevent it. But over time new discoveries about the human body led to the creation of vaccines which helped prevent the spread of illnesses such as small pox and antibiotics such as penicillin to help our bodies immune system. These new developments helped increase human lifespan by many years. Although new diseases are still being spread or created with new medical technology it's easier to find a cure or prevention to that new disease. Another example of new technologies that

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Improved the lives of individuals ~~is~~ is advances in communication with phones and the internet. Back then, societies communicated ideas and opinions through immigration from different parts of the world but now people have easier access with the telephones to communicate with others around the world. This increases the spread of new ideas and technologies to improve the lives of individuals and increase globalization. Another example of new technologies is the advancement in agriculture, with fertilizer. In past centuries, farmers use to use crop rotation in order to help get food for people but now advancements in fertilizer help provide people with more food that is safer for them to eat thus improving the lives of individuals. That is how new ~~technology~~ technologies in the twentieth century greatly improved the lives of individuals by increasing their live span with better diets and more medicines, and also improve their lives by better communicating with others.

Page 6

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New technologies in the 20th century have no doubt improved peoples lives. With the seemingly unlimited potential of technology from improvements in communication, transportation, medicine, agriculture, etc.. I can go as far as saying that technology will always be helpful from the invention of the wheel to super computers. The first improvement is in medicine, you cannot deny that we have significantly better medicine than way back. In the 20th century we have vaccines that can help prevent you from getting sick. You can definitely see an improvement on the average lifespan people can have. The second improvement is to transportation, in the 20th century there are planes, cars, and trains all over. With this you can go almost anywhere pretty quickly but there is one issue. With new modes of transport comes more unintended consequences of air pollution. So there is some harm but I think being able to go to the hospital faster outweighs the bad. So no doubt technology in the 20th century is an improvement for everyone.

Page 2

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Long Essay Question 4

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

Students were expected to answer a question about how advances in technology in the 20th century improved the lives of individuals with examples from communication, transportation, medicine, and agriculture. Students needed to develop an argument where they showed how specific technologies in the twentieth century did or did not improve lives and how by either making a claim or establishing specific categories for the argument. The question asked students to consider examples from communication, transportation, medicine, agriculture, and other fields, which gave students opportunities to develop responses through myriad examples. The question primarily addressed content from Unit 9 of the course framework, while also providing students with opportunities to bring up content knowledge from Units 7 and 8 to earn the contextualization point.

The question primarily addressed content from Topics 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3, with additional contextualization and evidence opportunities available from multiple topics in Units 7 and 8, as well as from Topics 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, and 9.7.

Sample: 4A

Thesis Score: 1

Contextualization Score: 1

Evidence Score: 2

Analysis and Reasoning Score: 2

Total Score: 6

A. Thesis/Claim (0-1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for thesis/claim. The response makes a historically defensible claim in the first paragraph by stating, “Technological advancements in the 20th century certainly improved lives ... [as t]ransportation improved, doctors were able to make major advancements in disease treatment and prevention and communication were developed to speed up the rate at which humans communicated over long distances.”

B. Contextualization (0-1 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for contextualization. In the first paragraph, the response states, “In the 18th and 19th century, the Industrial Revolution began, kicking off new inventions in manufacturing and transportation, forever changing societies around the globe.”

C. Evidence (0-2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for evidence. In the second paragraph, the response provided multiple pieces of relevant evidence including cars and airplanes, and fossil fuels leading to climate change. In the third paragraph, the response also identifies vaccines, radio, television, and social media. However, mention of steam engines in the second paragraph and social media in the fourth paragraph provide examples that are not relevant to the twentieth century.

Long Essay Question 4 (continued)

The response earned 1 point for evidence for supporting an argument. The response supports the argument in the second paragraph that “...inventions sped up how fast both people and goods could travel across great distances,” with one example being cars and airplanes. The response also supports the argument in the third paragraph that “...In medicine, advancements like vaccines, improved hygiene, and healthy lifestyles have increased in the quality of living,” with one evidence stating, “advancements like vaccines.” The response also supports the argument in the fourth paragraph that “...communication advancement have also brought about massive improvements to peoples lives” with evidence that includes “television, radio, phones.”

D. Analysis and Reasoning (0-2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for historical reasoning. The response explained in the second paragraph how cars and airplanes “for the most part are powered by fossil fuels, which lead to climate change and the destruction of earth’s natural resources by pollution.”

The response earned 1 point for demonstrating complex understanding. In the second paragraph, the response explains the negative effects of transportation technologies (fossil fuels leading to climate change; airplanes becoming “vessels of war”; epidemics spreading faster due to transportation advances. In the third paragraph, the response also provides several nuanced discussions qualifying the argument, including that medical advancements like vaccines improved the lives of individuals by leading to longer and healthier lives, however longer lives “...caused exponential population growth...fighting over limited resources...suffering from old-age diseases like alzheimers, arthritis, and heart disease...the advancements in medicine are also mostly felt by those living in the geographical north...” In the fourth paragraph, the response also provides a nuanced discussion of communication technology’s role in Americans questioning government reports on US successes in the Vietnam War based on television reports.

Sample: 4B**Thesis Score: 1****Contextualization Score: 0****Evidence Score: 2****Analysis and Reasoning Score: 1****Total Score: 4****A. Thesis/Claim (0-1 points): 1**

The response earned 1 point for thesis/claim. The response makes a historically defensible claim in the first paragraph, stating, “these new technologies greatly increased and improved the lives of individuals with new medicines such as vaccines and antibiotics, new forms of communications like the telephone and the internet and new additions to agriculture such as fertilizer.”

B. Contextualization (0-1 points): 0

The response did not earn a point for contextualization. There is an attempt at contextualization in the first sentence of the response, but it is too vague and generalized.

Long Essay Question 4 (continued)

C. Evidence (0-2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for evidence. In the first paragraph, the response mentions “...the creation of vaccines which helped prevent the spread of illnesses such as smallpox and antibiotics such as penicillin to help our bodies immune system.” Also in the first paragraph, the response discusses the telephone and the internet. Near the end of the response, the discussion of “fertilizer” was not credited toward the first evidence point, as it does not identify the development of synthetic fertilizers as a specifically twentieth century development.

The response earned 1 point for evidence supporting an argument. The response uses the invention of vaccines as evidence to support the argument that “[t]hese new developments helped increase human lifespan by many years.” The first paragraph also states that “although new diseases are still being spread or created with new medical technology it’s easier to find a cure or prevention to that new disease.” The response also develops the argument that advances in technology such as “phones and the internet” increased “the spread of new ideas and technologies to improve the lives of individuals and increase globalization.” Near the end, the response states the argument that agricultural advances improved people’s lives, but it only uses the generic term “fertilizer” as evidence, mistakenly juxtaposing the “crop rotation” of “past centuries” with the “advancement in agriculture with fertilizer.” This attempt was not credited toward the second point for evidence because the response did not specify that the advancements in question were in synthetic or industrially produced fertilizers.

D. Analysis and Reasoning (0-2 points): 1

The response earned 1 point for historical reasoning. The response provides several examples of causation by explaining that new technologies in medicine and communication technology led to improvement in people’s lives.

The response did not earn a point for demonstrating complex understanding. There was no attempt to demonstrate a complex understanding of how new technologies improved the lives of individuals during the twentieth century.

Sample: 4C

Thesis Score: 0

Contextualization Score: 0

Evidence Score: 2

Analysis and Reasoning Score: 0

Total Score: 2

A. Thesis/Claim (0-1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for thesis/claim. The response does not offer a historically defensible claim; it only restates what is provided in the prompt claiming it “no doubt improved people’s lives.”

Long Essay Question 4 (continued)

B. Contextualization (0-1 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for context. There is no attempt at providing context in the response.

C. Evidence (0-2 points): 2

The response earned 1 point for evidence by discussing vaccines that lead to longer lives and planes, cars, and trains that allow for more effective transportation.

The response earned 1 point for evidence supporting an argument. The response supports the argument in the first paragraph that medical advances improved people's lives by stating, "In the 20th century we have vaccines that can help you from getting sick. You can definitely see an improvement in the average lifespan people can have." The response also supports an argument that improved transportation improved people's lives by stating "The second improvement is to transportation, in the 20th century there are planes, cars, and trains all over. With this you can go almost anywhere pretty quickly" but noting that "With new modes of transportation comes more unintended consequences with air pollution. So there is some more harm but I think being able to go to the hospital fast outweighs the bad."

D. Analysis and Reasoning (0-2 points): 0

The response did not earn the point for historical reasoning. The response does not present convincing use of historical reasoning to frame its argument. The discussion of the "unintended consequences of air pollution" does not clearly explain the causal links that led to these unintended consequences.

The response did not earn the point for demonstrating complex understanding. The response includes an attempt at a nuanced argument about the unintended environmental effects resulting from the increased use planes, cars, and trains, but it is not developed sufficiently enough to earn the point.